

Concept Note

DOING IT RIGHT! Renewable Energy and Indigenous Peoples

November 10 | 05:30 PST, 08:30 EST, 15:30 EET, 21:30 PHST
Languages: English, Spanish, and French

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

Indigenous peoples across the globe are impacted by renewable energy projects being implemented by business in cooperation with states. While indigenous peoples support a just transition from fossil fuel to renewable energy as a key component of combating climate change, this transition must be guided by equity and a human rights-based approach, rather than business as usual, or risk this sector replicating the mistakes of the fossil fuel industry. With the proliferation of large-scale renewable energy projects in indigenous territories, this is again leading to land grabs, evictions, destruction of livelihoods and serious human rights violations against indigenous peoples across the globe.

The Business & Human Rights Resource Centre has tracked more than 200 allegations of abuse by renewable energy companies over the past 10 years, and the sector has become one of the most dangerous for human rights defenders to work. These kinds of projects are being implemented all around the world, with large investments in wind, solar, and geothermal energy in places as diverse as Kenya, Norway and Mexico; and expansion of large-scale hydro power from Chile to the Philippines to Nepal. Under the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UN Guiding Principles), renewable energy companies, like all companies, have a responsibility to prevent, mitigate, and remedy human rights harms caused by or contributed to by their operations and supply chains.

As the UN Forum on Business and Human Rights is taking place on November 16-18, 2020 to be a virtual meeting, IPRI and its partners wish to feature and draw attention to the state of affairs of renewable energy projects and indigenous peoples in relation to business and human rights. In particular, it will host a webinar to highlight the impacts of renewable energy development on the collective and individual rights of indigenous peoples, and the threats and repercussions facing indigenous peoples when they assert and defend their rights in these types of business projects. Complementing this year's theme of prevention of human rights abuses, the session will include recommendations on how companies, governments, and other stakeholders can help avoid human rights harms stemming from renewable energy projects.

THE WEBINAR

The webinar will run for one and half hours and will have a set of speakers for a moderated discussion (45 minutes) to set the stage for interactive exchange with participants (40 minutes).

SPEAKERS & MODERATOR



CHRISTINA HENRIKSEN
PRESIDENT, SÁMIRÁÐÐI - SAAMI COUNCIL | NORWAY

Christina is from Girkonjárga/Kirkenes, where the Norwegian side of Sápmi borders Finland and the Russian Federation. She represents the Norwegian Saami Association (Norgga Sámiid Riikkasearvi) in the Council and served as a Member of the Sámi Parliament (Norwegian side) for one period (2013-2017). Christina's academic background comprises political, social and religious science, Russian history and French and North Sámi languages. She has professional experience from the Barents Euro-Arctic Cooperation, including cooperation with indigenous partners and organizations in the north and project cooperation with Russia, as well as from EU relations in Brussels. She is also an educated teacher. She has been in the leadership of Sámi organizations for 20 years.



PRABINDRA SHAKYA
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND SOCIAL JUSTICE (CEMSOJ) NETWORK | NEPAL

Prabindra Shakya is a human rights activist from indigenous Newar community of Nepal. He has been engaged in promoting and protecting the rights of indigenous peoples and marginalized communities for over a decade now, whereby he specializes in human rights advocacy in the contexts of impacts of development finance, business operations and international investments. He has extensive working experience at regional and international levels as a Consultant with the Secretariat of UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in New York, the Human Rights Programme Coordinator and Advisor with the Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) in Thailand and a Steering Committee member and Asia regional representative of the Coalition of Human Rights in Development, among others. He currently coordinates the Community Empowerment & Social Justice Network (CEMSOJ) in Nepal that he founded and has previously worked with different human rights organizations in the country.



JESSIE CATO
PROGRAMME MANAGER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES & HUMAN RIGHTS, BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS RESOURCE CENTRE

Jessie Cato is the Programme Manager for Natural Resources & Human Rights at the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre. She is responsible for coordinating the Resource Centres work related to natural resources, including leading projects on renewable energy and transition minerals. Prior to this, Jessie worked at Oxfam America coordinating their Extractive Industries Knowledge Hub, and was also previously the National Director for Publish What You Pay (PWYP) Australia.



BIRGITTE FEIRING
DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEVELOPMENT, DANISH INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (DIHR)

Birgitte Feiring is Department Director at the Danish Institute for Human Rights, leading work to ensure that the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs are reached in a manner that realise human rights of all and leave no one behind. Birgitte has worked more than 30 years in the intertwined fields of sustainable development and human rights and has experience from Africa, Asia and Latin America. Birgitte has worked extensively on measurement of human rights and development outcomes, including by developing a comprehensive indicator-based monitoring framework for indigenous peoples' rights and development, and by analyzing and promoting a human rights-based approach to SDG monitoring. Birgitte is currently the chair of the SDG Working Group of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions.



JOAN CARLING (MODERATOR)
CO-DIRECTOR, INDIGENOUS PEOPLES RIGHTS INTERNATIONAL
CO-CONVENOR, INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' MAJOR GROUP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Joan Carling is an indigenous activist from the Cordillera, Philippines. She has been working on indigenous issues at the grassroots to international levels for more than 20 years. Her field of expertise includes indigenous peoples rights, human rights, sustainable development, environment, and climate change. Joan led the Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) as its Secretary General from 2009 to 2016. She was an expert member of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues from 2014-2016. She received the Champions of the Earth Lifetime Achievement Award from the UN Environment in September 2018. She is currently the co-convenor of the Indigenous Peoples' Major Group (IPMG) for Sustainable Development and the Co-Director of the Indigenous Peoples Rights International (IPRI)

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